

## **Week of September 23, 2002: MDOT Flash Facts**

### **Topic: Road Side Emergencies/Cellular Phone Use**

#### **Monday**

Emergencies can and do happen on the road at any time, ranging from a flat tire to a mechanical breakdown. Flash Facts this week will provide tips on how to minimize the stress of these emergencies and how to keep safe.

The first step in keeping safe is preventive maintenance. To minimize the chance of problems on the road, here are a few items to check:

- Is scheduled maintenance up to date?
- Are tires in good condition?
- Are fluids at proper levels?

Are you equipped for handling basic emergencies? Important items include:

- A good spare tire (required by law) and jack
- Battery jumper cables
- Basic tool kit
- First Aid Kit
- Flashlight
- Water
- Blanket

#### **Wednesday**

Flash Facts is looking at how to handle road emergencies this week.

Vehicle breakdowns rarely happen at a good time or in a good place, so think 'safety' when deciding how to handle them.

If possible, move the vehicle to a safe location away from the road. (Road shoulders are not a safe place to work on your car or wait for help.)

How to handle a breakdown:

- Get completely off the road (away from traffic)
- Turn on emergency flashers
- Move passengers to a safe location
- Call for help
- Watch for traffic

If you see a crash or an injury on the road:

- Call 911 (Stop at a safe location to make the call)
- If you stop, get completely off the road (Keep a safe distance from any moving traffic. Make sure your passengers are at a safe location)
- Let trained professionals direct traffic

**Friday**

It is estimated that 420 million mobile phone units will be sold worldwide in 2002 alone. (PCWorld.com Aug 29, 2002). The convenience of phoning anytime from anywhere has its advantages, but be careful not to compromise safety when using it.

Earlier this week Flash Facts talked about safety tips when handling an on the road emergency. Cell phones can be a great way to get out a call for help. Here are some pointers to help you use your phone safely:

- Make calls when your vehicle is stopped and safely off the road. (There are conflicting attention demands when combining phone use and driving)
  - Phone calls demand your concentration. (not just the attention it takes to find the phone and dial, but the conversation itself also demands mental concentration.)
  - Driving requires your full attention. Don't try to do both. When driving-just drive.
  - Roads side shoulders are not safe locations for making or taking calls. Use your phone only when you are off the road and away from moving traffic.
  - Have your passenger make the call. (If you are unable to stop to make it yourself)
- When calling to report an emergency, provide a highway mile point or a familiar landmark to help emergency responders find you quickly.